DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 371 433 EA 025 681

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TITLE Organizational Climate in Schools in Black Communities in South Africa: A Validation of the OCDQ-RS.
PUB DATE Apr 93
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Atlanta, GA, April 12-16, 1993). For a related document, see EA 025 682.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Environment; Factor Analysis; Foreign Countries; *Interprofessional Relationship; *Organizational Climate; Secondary Education; *Teacher Administrator Relationship; Test Reliability; Test Validity
IDENTIFIERS *South Africa

ABSTRACT

Prior to April 1, 1993, the education system in South Africa was fragmented along racial lines. Five departments of education existed, each with its own political head. This paper presents findings of a study that examined the organizational climate of the Department of Education and Training, which regulated education for the 10 major black groups (excluding independent states and self-governing states). The study sought to: (1) test the validity and reliability of the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire-Rutgers Secondary (OCDQ-RS); and (2) determine the openness of the schools' organizational climates. The questionnaire was administered to 684 teachers in 31 secondary schools in Diamond Field Region. The instrument measured five factors of organizational climate--two regarding principals' management behaviors and three regarding staff relations practices. Findings support the validity and reliability of the instrument for use in the South African black community. On the average, rural schools had slightly higher levels of openness than did urban schools. In contrast with other tests of the instrument in the United States and in a white South African community, the black school community viewed the principal behaviors of supervising, controlling, and monitoring as supportive. Nine tables are included. (LMI)

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ED 371 433

ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE IN SCHOOLS IN BLACK COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA: A VALIDATION OF THE OCDQ-RS

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association,

April 1993 in Atlanta, USA

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Human Sciences Research Council Reports (1981) propose a new education structure for South Africa, based on a new education policy which consists of eleven principles. Furthermore, the constitutional change in South Africa in 1983 has brought about comprehensive changes in the control and administrative structure of education. This new education dispensation has been recommended in accordance with the philosophy of the HSRC report, incorporating the progressive inplementation of the principle of equal opportunity in education, including the goal of equal standards of education for all inhabitants of South Africa. The new education policy also recognizes the principle of commonality and diversity of the religious and cultural way of life of the inhabitants. In the constitution, this principle has led to the education of each race group being their own affair within the philosophy of life and cultural framework of each group. This led to new legislation in 1983, 1986 and 1988, specifically regarding education policy. Therefore, in spite of motions requesting only one education system for South Africa, provision has been made within the new dispensation for five state departments of education, each with its own political head as follows:

* Department of National Education - for general education policy
* Department of Education and Training - for Blacks, including all **ten** major ethnic Black groups, each with its own language and culture, excluding the independent states and self-governing states
* Department of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Assembly - for Whites
* Department of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Representatives - for Coloureds
* Department of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Delegates - for Indians.

These five education departments function in all provinces of South Africa, i.e. Transvaal, Natal, Orange Free State and Cape Province, but not in the **Self Governing National States** (for blacks) i.e. Kwazulu, Kangwane, Quaqua, Gazankulu, Lebowa, Kwandebele, or in the **Independent States**, (also for blacks) i.e. Republic of Transkei, Republic of Bophuthatswana, Republic of Venda and the Republic of Ciskei.

Work on a totally new political dispensation in South Africa started with the opening of parliament in February 1990. The announcement that the fragmentation of education

into different education departments would be ended as from 1 April 1993 forms part of this process of change and renewal. In order to facilitate the management and administration of education there will be only one education system, with various regional education departments. The principle of unity and diversity will still be upheld, but without the element of ethnicity based on colour.

The organizational climate in the Department of Education and Training was investigated in this research. The Department of Education and Training consists of eight regions, each with its own regional director and main office. The research in this paper deals specifically with one of the regions, viz. the Diamond Field Region.

2. Theoretical background

Organizational climate is a component of the quality of the working life of the teacher. Aspects like efficient mamagement and the mutual relations between teachers lead to a specific 'atmosphere' at a school. This atmosphere and the teacher's experience of his/her working environment form the most important elements of the organizational climate (Hoy & Miskel, 1987:225; Basson, *et al.*, 1990:654; Zaaiman, 1990:162; Owens, 1991:167).

When it is kept in mind that the climate in a school is formed by the norms, views of life, and attitudes towards life which are reflected in the school (Basson, *et al.*, 1990:654), it becomes clear that these aspects must form the basis for any attempt to create a (more positive) organizational climate, or for to preserve such a climate.

The point of departure with regard to creating the organizational climate thus lies not in the wishes of, for instance, the school principal, but in an analysis of the school situation. This is understood as entailing the existing value system (preferences and presuppositions) of staff, and the attitude of staff towards the school. Only if the principal acknowledges and respects these aspects, will she/he be able to start building a more positive working environment. The 'atmosphere' of the school reflects the shared experiences of staff with regard to their working environment, based on the underlying value structure.

Creating a positive organizational climate implies much more, according to Du Brin (1984:413), than cosmetically implementing a management or organization developing programme. Radical changes in management philosophy and values are necessary in order to adjust to the underlying values of the workers. Changing the organizational climate implies changing the organizational culture.

Organizational climate is, for the purposes of this research, defined next as the general atmosphere in the school, and this atmosphere is the result of the way in which the teacher experiences his/her working environment. The experience of the working environment depends upon factors like the quality of mutual relations, and the management method.

When these two aspects (the quality of mutual relations and the management method) are accepted as basic determinants of the organizational climate in a school, the question arises of how measurable these two aspects are within the context of the organizational climate. Furthermore, it may be accepted as a given that schools differ, and that the experience of the openness of the organizational climate by the teacher will therefore vary as well (Hoy & Miskel, 1987:225).

It is clear that, in order to create and develop a positive organizational climate, the exiting organizational climate must first be measured. It is precisely for this reason that a meassuring instrument may be used in order to make an organizational diagnosis with the aim of improving the organizational climate. Viewed against this background, the aim of this research has been to indicate that it is possible to use a measuring instrument in order to make a reliable diagnoses of the climate of a school. This aim has been operationalized in the following objectives:

* to determine the validity of the OCDQ-RS questionnaire in a South Africa context as well as the reliability of the questionnaire

* to determine the openness of the schools by using an instrument.

3. POPULATION AND MEASURING INSTRUMENT

3.1 Population

The population consisted of teachers on post levels 1 and 2 on the staff of secondary schools in the Diamond Field Region controlled by the Department of Education and Training (n = 972). A random sample was taken, involving 31 of these schools. Responses from 31 schools were received (684 teachers). The research was undertaken in 1992. The area covered by this region consists of more than 25% of the total land area of South Africa, and is well balanced with regard to urban and rural schools.

3.2 Measuring instrument

The measuring instrument used in the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire - Rugters Secondary (OCDQ-RS). Five factors were designated in the original investigation (Kottkamp, *et al.*, 1987) in New Jersey in the USA, of which two were

defined in terms of the management behaviour of the principal, and three in terms of the mutual relations among staff. The purpose of the (OCDQ-RS) is to determine and express numerically the openness of the organizational climate in a school. This figure is obtained by processing the score of each of the factors (per school) by means of a specific arithmetical combination.

The measuring instrument consists of thirty-four questions, which measure five factors in terms of the teacher's experience of the organizational climate in his/her school. These factors are:

- principal supportive behaviour (PSB): seven questions
- principal directive behaviour (PDB): seven questions
- teacher engaged behaviour (TEB): ten questions
- teacher frustrated behaviour (TFB): six questions
- teacher intimate behaviour (TIB): four questions

3.3 Reliability of the questionnaire

With the aid of a number of statistical techniques and procedures (e.g. factorial analyses, frequency procedures and effect size) analyses were made of the openness of each individual school as well as differences in the openness of organizational climate between different schools. A factorial analysis pointed out the construct validity of the questionnaire within the relevant South Africa population, while the reliability of the questionnaire was also indicated. Using the Cronbach-alpha coefficient for reliability, it was found that the coefficients for the five subscales range between 0,61 and 0.91.

These figures compare favourably with the findings of the survey undertaken by Kottkamp, *et al.* (1987), which range between 0,71 and 0,91, as well as with the survey undertaken in white communities in South Africa, which range between 0.74 and 0,96 (cf. Mentz & Van der Westhuizen, 1993).

The reliability of the different subscales of the questionnaire, measured according to the Alpha-coefficient, is as follows:

PSB	0,91	PDB	0,70		
TEB	0,79	TFB	0,61	TIB	0,69

FACTOR LOADINGS OF THE FINAL 5-FACTOR VARIMAX-ROTATION FOR THE 34 ITEMS OF THE OCDQ-RS

SUBSCALE	ITEM	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	FACTOR 3	FACTOR 4	FACTOR 5
PSB	23	0,71				
	29	0,62				
	6	0,56				
	24	0,67				
	30	0,66				
	25	0,63				
	5	0,59				
TEB	34		0,60			
	11		0,34			
	16		0,66			
	4		0,62			
	3		0,45			
	20		0,70			
	28		0,54			
	17					0,35
	33					0,59
	10				0,41	
PDB	31	0,64				
	13	0,44				
	18	0,53				
	12			0,72		
	19			0,69		
	32			0,63		
	7			0,65		
TFB	15				0,62	
	2				0,53	
	22				0,62	
	8				0,57	
	9		0,38			
	1		0,56			
TIB	26					0,53
	21					0,57
	27		0,53			
	14		0,37			

PSB = Principal supportive behaviour; TEB = Teacher engaged behaviour; PDB = Principal directive behaviour; TFB = Teacher frustrated behaviour; TIB = Teacher intimate behaviour

For the sake of clarifying the factor analysis, the following must be pointed out:

* The factor weightings were grouped in such a way that comparisons were possible with the original results (Kottkamp, *et al.*, 1987). Because of this differences and similarities appear more clearly.

* Significantly different results in terms of the factor weighting occur due to the different cultural environments within which the research in the USA and that in the RSA were carried out:

  - Question 13 ("The school principal monitors everything the teachers do") had a high factor weighting in factor 3 (PDB) in the research carried out in the USA. The question had a high weighting in factor 1 (PSB), however, in the research carried out in die RSA. In other words, while monitoring is viewed in the USA as *directive behaviour*, it is viewed as *supportive behaviour* in the RSA context witin which the research was carried out. The same difference is found in question 18 ("The principal controls the teachers closely"), and in question 31 ("The school principal closely supervises the teachers").

  - A significant difference also occurs in question 10 ("The student council influences school policy"). This item had a high factor weighting in factor 2 (Teacher engaged behaviour) in the USA, while it had a high weighting in factor 4 (Teacher frustrated behaviour) in the RSA. The reason for this may be found in the fact that many schools in black communities are controlled by student councils. These student councils even take unilateral decisions on firing teachers and school principals, and on expelling pupils.

* The total percentage variance which was explained through the five factors is 42,1%. (In the research carried out in the USA it was 65,7%.)

* The construct validity of the five subscales and the significance attached to the constructs may be accepted (with certain exceptions as mentioned above) because a stable factor construct was obtained.

3.5 Procedure for interpreting the results

* The numbers (1 to 4) that were encircled on the questionnaire by the teachers, were summed for each factor and a total for each factor per teacher was obtained.

* All the totals of all the factors were summed for each school (T) to obtain a grand total per school for each of the five factors.

* The totals of the five factors for each school were standardised with the aid of the following formula:

$$\text{Sd for T} = 100 \times (T - A)/D + 500,$$

with T designating the summed total (per school) for factors T and A the standard deviation for factors T.

* Five standardised scores per school, namely Sd for PSB, Sd for PDB, Sd for TEB, Sd for TFB and Sd for TIB, were thus obtained.

This standardisation was necessary in order to make comparisons between schools possible, where necessary.

* The index of openness of each school was computed with the following formula:

$$\text{Openness} = \frac{(\text{Sd for PSB}) + (1000\text{-Sd for PDB}) + (\text{Sd for TEB}) + (1000\text{-Sd for TEB})}{4}$$

In this formula the two positive factors, namely PSB (supportive behaviour of the principal) and TEB (engaged behaviour of the teachers) are thus computed together with the two negative factors, namely PDB (directive behaviour of the principal) and TFB (frustrated behaviour of the teachers). The factor TIB (intimate behaviour of the teachers) did not add sufficiently to the openness to form part of the index of openness.

* After the scores of the five factors, as well as the openness of each school, were determined, the schools were grouped per area, and the areas per region. The areas and regions can thus be compared.

* To enable a meaningful analysis of the data, the scores that were obtained for each factor and for openness, were divided into catogories. The scale that was used for the scores, is as follows (cf. Hoy *et al.*, 1991:168):

Above 600:	Very high
551 - 600:	High
525 - 550:	Above average
511 - 524:	Slightly above average
490 - 510:	Average
476 - 489:	Slightly below average
450 - 475:	Below average
400 - 449:	Low
Under 400:	Very low

An analysis of the openness fo the region will next be made, followed by an analysis of the openness of each of the areas in the region Diamond Field.

4. FINDINGS: OPENNESS INDEX OF THE REGION: DIAMOND FIELD

4.1 The total subscale scores and openness of the Region: Diamond Field

The subscale scores and openness were as follows:

PSB	550	(Above average)
PDB	594	(High)
TEB	544	(Above average)
TFB	627	(Very high)
TIB	571	(High)
Openness	468	(Below average)

The openness (468) of this region is classified as: Below average. The reason is to be found in the *high* score obtained for factor TFB (627). *Highly* frustrated behaviour is the result of a large amount of administrative work and the execution of tasks that are unrelated to teaching. It is further evident that principals are *more* directive (594) than supportive (550) and that teachers are *more* frustrated (627) than engaged (544). Both the principal and the teachers thus experience more negative aspects than positive ones.

4.2 Openness index of the schools in Area 1

4.2.1 Openness index of the schools as a whole

The results of this area can be described as positive, since the openness was somewhat above average (522). The positive factors PSB (537) and TEB (537) both obtained *above-average* scores, while the negative factors, PDB (472) and TFB (510), respectively, obtained *below-average* scores. Factor TIB (576) is very salient as a *high* score was obtained. Teachers thus co-operate well, while the principals care for the teachers and motivate them.

4.2.2 School with the highest openness index

SCHOOL 5		
PRINCIPAL		
Supportive behaviour	731	*Very high*
Directive behaviour	314	*Very low*
TEACHER		
Engaged behaviour	694	*Very high*
Frustrated behaviour	304	*Very low*
Intimate behaviour	556	*High*
OPENNESS	701	*Very high*

4.2.3 School with the lowest openness index

SCHOOL 7		
PRINCIPAL		
Supportive behaviour	304	*Very low*
Directive behaviour	470	*Below Average*
TEACHER		
Engaged behaviour	304	*Very low*
Frustrated behaviour	689	*Very high*
Intimate behaviour	462	*Below Average*
OPENNESS	362	*Very low*

4.3. Openness index of the schools in Area 2

4.3.1 Openness index of the schools as a whole

Characteristic of the results of this area is the small variance in the obtained scores. Both the positive (PSB = 537) and negative (PDB = 526) factors pertaining to the principal obtained *above-average* scores. Positive teacher factors (TEB = 546; TIB = 524) obtained, respectively, *above-average* and *somewhat above-average* scores, while the negative factor (TFB = 536) also obtained an *above-average* score. The level of openness (505) is thus classified as *average*. The principals thus support the teachers, but also control their activities. Staff members enjoy working together, but also experience the amount of administrative work negatively.

4.3.2 School with the highest openness index

SCHOOL 5		
PRINCIPAL		
Supportive behaviour	591	*High*
Directive behaviour	465	*Below Average*
TEACHER		
Engaged behaviour	645	*Very high*
Frustrated behaviour	537	*Above average*
Intimate behaviour	581	*High*
OPENNESS	558	*High*

4.3.3 School with the lowest openness index

SCHOOL 4		
PRINCIPAL		
Supportive behaviour	369	*Very low*
Directive behaviour	446	*Low*
TEACHER		
Engaged behaviour	351	*Very low*
Frustrated behaviour	541	*Above average*
Intimate behaviour	474	*Below Average*
OPENNESS	433	*Low*

4.4 Openness index of the schools in Area 3

4.4.1 Openness index of the schools as a whole

The openness of this area can be classified as *below average.* The positive factor pertaining to the principal (PSB = 485), as well as one of the positive factors pertaining to the teachers (TIB = 489) obtained *somewhat below-average* scores. The *very high* level of frustrated behaviour draws the attention. It indicates that teachers are burdened with routine tasks and administrative work unrelated to teaching. The *above-average* score obtained for TEB (547), however, indicates that the teachers are proud of their schools, support each other and enjoy working together.

4.4.2 School with the highest openness index

SCHOOL 7		
PRINCIPAL		
Supportive behaviour	547	*Above average*
Directive behaviour	479	*Slightly below Average*
TEACHER		
Engaged behaviour	547	*Above average*
Frustrated behaviour	393	*Very low*
Intimate behaviour	591	*High*
OPENNESS	555	*High*

4.4.3 School with the lowest openness index

SCHOOL 2		
PRINCIPAL		
Supportive behaviour	448	*Low*
Directive behaviour	697	*Very high*
TEACHER		
Engaged behaviour	459	*Below Average*
Frustrated behaviour	640	*Very high*
Intimate behaviour	396	*Very low*
OPENNESS	392	*Very low*

4.5 Openness index of the schools in Area 4

4.5.1 Openness index of the schools as a whole

The level of openness for this area is *below average.* It is noteworthy, however, that *high* scores were obtained for both PSB (591) and PDB (596). The principal thus supports and motivates, but also exercises strong control over the teachers. The *very low* scores obtained for TEB (378) and TIB (390) indicate that teachers neither support each other, nor have good social relationships, while the frustrated behaviour (496) is average.

4.5.2 School with the highest openness index

SCHOOL 5		
PRINCIPAL		
Supportive behaviour	485	*Slightly below Average*
Directive behaviour	496	*Average*
TEACHER		
Engaged behaviour	489	*Slightly below Average*
Frustrated behaviour	459	*Below Average*
Intimate behaviour	552	*High*
OPENNESS	504	*Average*

4.5.3 School with the lowest openness index

SCHOOL 2		
PRINCIPAL		
Supportive behaviour	528	*Above average*
Directive behaviour	663	*Very high*
TEACHER		
Engaged behaviour	403	*Low*
Frustrated behaviour	521	*Slightly Above average*
Intimate behaviour	475	*Below Average*
OPENNESS	436	*Low*

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The questionnaire was found to be valid and reliable in the black community in the RSA. The same finding was reached in the USA and in a white community in the RSA (compare Mentz and Van der Westhuizen, 1993).

5.2 The results of the factor analysis largely agree with research carried out in the USA (cf. Kottkamp, *et al.*, 1987), and in a white community (cf. Mentz and Van der Westhuizen, 1992).

5.3 Some of the most important differences between this investigation and the ones mentioned above lie in the different perceptions with regard to

* supervision
* controlling
* and monitoring

by the school principal. These aspects are viewed as *supportive* behaviour in black communities.

5.4 When the 31 schools were subdivided into rural and urban areas, it was found that the average openness of the schools in rural areas were slightly higher than that of the schools in urban areas. This finding is in line with well known facts indicating a higher degree of political unrest among students in urban high schools, as well as a higher degree of teacher dissatisfaction in urban areas.

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